THE REAL THING

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

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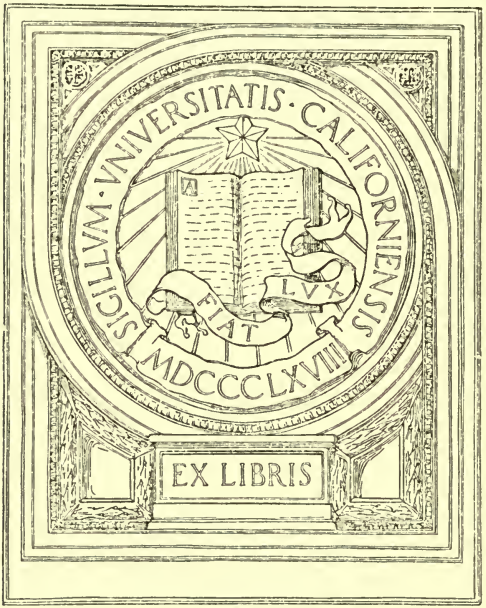

THE REAL THING

THE REAL THING
AND THREE OTHER FARCES

BY
JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

ILLUSTRATED

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THE REAL THING

THE REAL THING

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MICHAEL MAGINNIS, *proprietor of The Employers' Bureau.*
MRS. THADDEUS PERKINS, *a lady of meekness and spirit.*
MRS. DELANCEY PELL, *an employer in search of a place.*
MRS. BROWNING, *a sufferer from domestic complications.*
MRS. HAWKINS, *a discouraged seeker after help.*
MRS. BRIDGET O'HARA, *a culinary star, auburn haired and haughty. Not French.*
BILL, *a bell-boy.*
TIME.—*To-day, or possibly to-morrow and the day after.*

SCENE.—*The office of the Maginnis Employers' Bureau, 498 Fifth Avenue, New York city. It is a large square, room, barely furnished. At rear right and left are two windows, between which there stands a roll-top desk, with a swivel chair in front of it. At right rear entrance is a swinging glass door opening upon corridor, with the name of the agency upon it in gold letters.*

At left middle entrance is an ordinary door leading into another apartment. It is labelled "Dressing Room." On either side of this door are rows of camp-stools, about twelve in number, all but one of which are occupied by fashionably dressed women, looking very tired, worried, indignant, or anxious. Some of them are fanning themselves nervously. One is reading the advertising section of a newspaper. The curtain rising discovers this picture and group, with Maginnis *busy writing at the desk, his back to the audience. An appreciable pause follows, at the end of which he rises, takes up the manuscript he has been writing, scratches his chin, and scans the paper. Taps a bell on his desk, and walks slowly to front of stage.*

Maginnis. There, that ought to fetch 'em. (*Reads aloud.*) Wanted, Employers of Domestic Assistance. Only strict-

ly first-class people need apply. References required. The Maginnis Employers' Agency, 498 Fifth Avenue, New York. (*Returns to desk and taps the bell again.*) Where the dickens is that boy? (*Bangs bell hard and continuously. Finally, there being no response, he goes to door opening into corridor and calls.*) Bill!

Bill (*from without*). Yep!

Maginnis. What are you doing—playing craps again?

Bill. Yep.

Maginnis. Well, come here. I want you. (*Returns to centre of stage.*) They're all alike. Even the errand-boys aren't willing to attend to business.

Enter Bill.

Bill (*airily*). Wotcher want?

Maginnis. Don't you talk to me that way, you little scamp!

Bill. Aw, go on, Mister Maginnis. (*Grins.*) I don't mean nothin' by it.

Maginnis. Well, don't you forget that I'm your boss, Bill. Just because your mother is a successful cook is no reason why you should take on high and mighty airs with me. See?

Bill (*grinning*). Dat's all right, Mister Maginnis—but I ain't just a hired man, neither. I'm in my business just like youse is in yours, an' I'll treat you right s'long as you treat me right. See?

Maginnis. You're a chip of the old block, Bill. I'd bounce you in a minute if I could do any better. But come, now, get your hat and take this down to the *Herald* office.

Bill. Yep—that buildin' in front of the teayter?

Maginnis. Yes. Tell them I want that printed in the society section next Sunday, where it will be read by all the first families, and in big type.

Bill. Yep. You mean in where it says Mrs. Bolivar Jones is visitin' Mrs. Willie K. Moneypacker at Nooport?

Maginnis. That's it, Bill. Tell 'em to give it a good position there and to make out a bill for it, and you pay it with this.

[*Hands* Bill *a twenty-dollar note.*

Bill. Do I keep the change?

[*Grins.*

Maginnis. Yes—keep it until you get back here, and then I'll take charge of it. Now get along, and don't let any grass grow under your feet.

[Bill *walks to the corner of the room and picks a hat up from the floor and walks out, whistling as he goes.*

Maginnis (*turning to ladies*). Good-morning, ladies.

Ladies. Good-morning, Mr. Maginnis.

Maginnis. Sorry to keep you waiting, but servants nowadays aren't either frequent or early risers. We are expecting a half-dozen in this morning, however, and I trust you will be able to —er—arrange with them satisfactorily.

First Lady. I don't mind waiting, Mr. Maginnis. (*Laughs.*) I am getting quite used to it.

Second Lady. I've been waiting three months for a cook, but it has been real restful; though I will say I'd like to know what has become of the children all this while.

[*A knock on the corridor door is heard.*

Maginnis. Come in.

Enter Mrs. Thaddeus Perkins, *timidly. She approaches* Maginnis.

Mrs. Perkins. Is this—Mr. Maginnis?

Maginnis. Yes, madam.

Mrs. Perkins. I understand you have an employment bureau here, and I have come—

Maginnis. Not an employ*ment* bureau madam. An employ*ers'* bureau. There is a difference. We don't provide employment for servants, but employers of domestic service for those who are willing to accept household positions.

Mrs. Perkins. I don't quite understand.

Maginnis. I will gladly explain. Nowadays things are not as they used to be. Formerly employers went to intelligence-offices to procure cooks and waitresses and maids from a long line of persons seeking employment.

Mrs. Perkins. Yes—I know. I have visited—oh, quite a few.

Maginnis. Well, our establishment, owing to certain social changes of late years, has adopted a different method—my own invention, I am proud to say. Here we keep not servants for employers to choose, but employers for domestic artists to choose. There aren't any servants any more. I hope you see the point of difference.

Mrs. Perkins. Oh yes, indeed! It is not too subtle for my eye. Indeed, I have seen it coming for some time. But how do you manage? Suppose I needed a cook—which I assure you I do—what must I do to get one here?

Maginnis. First you enter your name

on our books, for which we charge a minimum fee of $25. Then you hand us your references from servants previously in your employ, with a statement of your standing in the financial and social world, verified by a notary's certificate, and a note from the cashier of your bank saying that your account is good—

Mrs. Perkins. Dear me! Isn't that going a trifle far?

Maginnis. Maids demand it these times, madam, and we must make the best of it. It is a condition, not a theory, that confronts us.

Mrs. Perkins. I see. And then what?

Maginnis. If, upon the whole, your references are satisfactory, we assign one of these camp-stools to your use for a period of two weeks, and let you occupy it until you have successfully accomplished what you wish.

Mrs. Perkins (*eagerly*). You guarantee me a cook?

Maginnis. We guarantee nothing save

your undisputed use of the camp-stool for the period of your subscription—$25 for two weeks, $50 a month.

Mrs. Perkins. But—Mr. Maginnis—where does the cook come in? That's what I—

Maginnis. Right through that door, madam. [*Pointing to glass door.*

Mrs. Perkins. Oh, I don't mean that. I mean about when may I expect to see a cook?

Maginnis. That I cannot say. All I can say is that the most aristocratic domestic servants in the city come here looking for employers. One, two, five, seven, twenty-seven, may be in at any moment, and then again there may not be any in for several days. We have no control over their movements.

Mrs. Perkins. Still, if I subscribe, the chances are that I shall get what I want?

Maginnis. That will all depend on yourself, madam. The best we can do is to afford you an opportunity.

Mrs. Perkins. Well—I don't know. I —I don't know what else to do. We're taking all our meals at a hotel now, and it is not only awkward but expensive. The children have such large appetites, and are never satisfied with less than three desserts.

Maginnis. I shall be very glad to have your name on my list, and I will do all I can to get you a position.

Mrs. Perkins. A position?

Maginnis. I speak the language of the condition, madam. Yes—a position, as mistress to a cook.

Mrs. Perkins. Oh yes—I'd forgotten. Well (*opening her purse*), here is twenty-five dollars. My name is Mrs. Perkins—Mrs. Thaddeus Perkins, of Montclair—

Maginnis. Hm! Country?

Mrs. Perkins. Yes; you—you won't keep me out on that account, I hope. We're quite as much human beings as city people, you know.

Maginnis. No, madam. Of course

not—but our subscription for country people — commuters, we call them (*laughs pleasantly*)—is ten dollars extra. You see, the service rendered is so much greater. You perhaps don't realize how hard it is to get girls who are willing to go out of the city.

Mrs. Perkins. Oh yes, I do. I've kept house for a number of years, Mr. Maginnis. There is the extra ten. (*Hands* Maginnis *a ten-dollar bill.*) My bank is the Wheat Exchange, and fortunately I have my book, just written up. (*Produces it.*) See? It shows a balance yesterday of $1146.38—though how they make it out I must say I don't know. I was sure I had $1238.42.

Maginnis (*taking the book*). I will send to the bank and have it verified. Now as to your social position, Mrs. Perkins, I happen to know about that. My cousin used to be your husband's father's coachman. But references from your previous servants—have you any?

Mrs. Perkins. Why, no — I never heard of such a thing.

Maginnis. I suppose you don't know where your last cook is this morning, so that I might reach her on the 'phone?

Mrs. Perkins. Yes—she's at the New York Inebriate Asylum—

Maginnis. Thank you. I'll communicate with her. Her name was?

Mrs. Perkins. Flaherty — Nora Flaherty.

Maginnis (jotting down name and address). Thank you. And you parted on good terms?

Mrs. Perkins. Well—you might say so. She wept on my shoulder and told me she'd always regard me as a mother, but at the time she was very—

Maginnis. I understand.

Mrs. Perkins. It required four policemen to get her to leave. (*Laughs.*) Perhaps that's a sign that she was attached to the place.

Maginnis. It may be so. Anyhow, it

will be all right, Mrs. Perkins. If I can get a good word from her for you, it will of course be of great assistance in getting you your place. And if I can't (*looks about mysteriously*), well, there are other ways of fixing it. (*Confidentially.*) We have blank references always ready for those that are otherwise unprovided.

Mrs. Perkins. But — Mr. Maginnis— that isn't quite honest, is it? Forged references?

Maginnis. Compared with the general run of references, madam, which ladies used to give departing servants, I think it is. Moreover, our blank references are not forged. They are all signed by cooks in good standing, and have been purchased by us for use in this particular business. We leave only the date line and the employer's name blank, to be filled in later.

Mrs. Perkins. Oh, well, I suppose all's fair in love and domestic service—and I simply must have a cook!

Maginnis (*walking to empty camp-stool*). This is your place, Mrs. Perkins.

Mrs. Perkins (*sitting*). Thank you.

Maginnis (*looking down the line*). Excuse me, Mrs. Pell, but you look a trifle dowdy this morning. I'd prink up a bit if I were you. These girls are very particular.

Mrs. Pell. Very well, Mr. Maginnis. I had to hurry so to get here in time.

[*Exit into outer chamber.*

Maginnis. And you, Mrs. Browning —don't you think it would improve your chances if your gloves weren't out at the finger-tips? I would suggest a new pair.

Mrs. Browning. I can't afford a new pair.

Maginnis. And do you expect to get a thirty-dollar housemaid when your personal appearance suggests that you haven't got thirty cents?

Mrs. Browning (*bursting into tears*). It's because I have to pay thirty dollars

for a housemaid that I can't afford new gloves.

Maginnis (*kindly*). Well, you should have spoken to me about it. How was I to know? What is your size?

Mrs. Browning (*wiping her eyes*). Fours.

Maginnis. I will lend you a pair.

Mrs. Browning (*confidentially*). Better make them sixes, Mr. Maginnis.

[Maginnis *goes to desk, opens drawer, and takes out a large box of women's gloves. Selects a pair and hands them to* Mrs. Browning. *They are flaming red.*

Mrs. Browning. Mercy! Why, Mr. Maginnis—what an awful, awful color!

Maginnis (*laughing*). Take my advice and wear them, Mrs. Browning. I have sat in this game for fifteen years and I know the taste of our patrons. Those gloves will help you—you see if they don't. I'd take that frown off my face if I were you, Mrs. Hawkins,

Mrs. Hawkins. Well, I just simply can't. I haven't had my breakfast, and my head aches, and the baby's got the measles—

[*The other ladies draw away in consternation.*

Maginnis. Then you'd better go home. I'll give you an extra day at the end of your subscription, but I tell you right now that you won't get a waitress in this place while you look so like a meat-axe. Better go home and rest up and come back to-morrow.

Mrs. Hawkins. It's very kind of you, Mr. Maginnis. (*Rises and walks to door. As she reaches it she turns and calls back.*) If anybody should come that you think—

[*Bumps backward into* Bridget O'Hara, *who enters haughtily and dressed to the nines.*

Mrs. Hawkins. Oh, I beg your pardon.

Bridget (*indignantly*). G'wan wid yez!

Phwoy don't yez look where yez is goin'? 'Tis a pretty kittle o' fish whin a la-ady can't enter a glash dure widout havin' hersilf shtove in before boy wimmen walkin' out behoind.

[Mrs. Hawkins *retires in confusion.* Maginnis *grins and walks obsequiously forward and bows to* Bridget.

Bridget. Good-marnin' to ye, Maginnis. Have yez anny impl'yers fer me to luk over this marnin'?

Maginnis. Yes, Mrs. O'Hara. I have several.

Bridget (*glancing at the row of nervous women*). Sure is thim they?

Maginnis. Yes, Mrs. O'Hara. Three of them are anxious to be employed by a culinary artist—

Bridget. Anxious is ut? Sure they do well to be anxious. Do yez know 'em?

Maginnis. They are all of irreproachable social standing.

Bridget. Ye're sure about that, ar-rre

ye? There's manny a foine-spoken lady outside that ain't in th' social re-gisther.

Maginnis. I have looked them all up, Mrs. O'Hara, and I know they're all right. Would you like to speak to one of them?

Bridget. Sure. Oi t'ink oi'll hov a worrud wid the wan wid the pink mitts. She's a good-looker.

Maginnis. Mrs. Browning.

Mrs. Browning (*rising*). Yes, sir.

[Bridget *sits and gazes critically at* Mrs. Browning, *who stands, more or less timidly, before her.*

Bridget. Are yez an impl'yer?

Mrs. Browning. Y-yes.

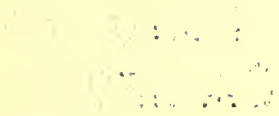
Bridget. How many years?

Mrs. Browning. Seventeen.

Bridget. How many culinary la-adies hov yez had in the lasht foive?

Mrs. Browning. Why—let me see. (*Counting on her fingers.*) There was Jane, and Mary, and Clementine, and Emma, and Katie, and Mary—

"THERE'S MANNY A FOINE-SPOKEN LADY OUTSIDE THAT AIN'T IN TH' SOCIAL RE-GISTHER"



Bridget. Yez said that wance befure.

Mrs. Browning. Well, there have been four Marys altogether—Mary Dunnigan, Mary Finnegan, Mary Flanigan, and Mary Madigan.

Bridget. Niver moind their names. Ginrally, how many?

Mrs. Browning. About thirty-nine.

Bridget (*sarcastic*). Ye've had a larrge experience. Oi don't t'ink ye'll do. Mr. Maginnis, give me somebody that a la-ady can live wid.

Mrs. Browning. If you'll only come and give me a trial—

Bridget. That 'll do fur you. Oi ain't lookin' f'r a plaace to shtop overnight. Oi want a risidence that's handy, wid a chance f'r a long lease.

[Mrs. Browning *retires crestfallen and sits down.*

Bridget. Me toime's limited, Maginnis. Sure an' oi hov a bridge-party for th' afthernoon. Malone doied yisterday,

an' we're goin' to bridge him over instid of a wake. Have yez nothin' else?

Maginnis. I think I have. (*Goes to door and calls.*) Mrs. Pell, step this way, please.

[*Minces toward centre.*

Bridget (*laughing*). Sure she'd have a harrd toime steppin' thot way, Maginnis.

Mrs. Pell (*at doorway*). Me?

[*At nod from* Maginnis *she walks forward.*

Bridget. Oi loikes yer looks. What's yer name?

Mrs. Pell. Mrs. Delancey Pell.

Bridget. Pill is ut?

Mrs. Pell (*bravely*). No—Pell—not pill.

Bridget Sure oi know—oi know. Oi said Pill, not pill. Pay, ay, douhble ill —Pill. Where do yez live?

Mrs. Pell. Morristown, New Jersey.

Bridget. Maginnis—take her away. D'yez t'ink oi'm old Napoleon Boney-

party that oi'd want to spind me decloinin' years in the soobubs? It's New York or nothin'—d'ye undherstand?

Maginnis. I—I beg your pardon, Mrs. O'Hara. I understood Mrs. Pell to say she lived in town in winter—

Mrs. Pell. I do, Mr. Maginnis. I want a co—culinary artist for my town house.

Bridget. Aha! Thot's different. Anny children?

Mrs. Pell. Three boys.

Bridget. That's a larrge family—if yer husband's around much.

Mrs. Pell. The boys go to boarding-school, Mrs. O'Hara, and my husband and I spend January and February at Palm Beach.

Bridget. How about October, and Novimber, and Decimber?

Mrs. Pell. We usually remain at Morristown until Thanksgiving.

Bridget. Oi see—so that ye'd raly only need me active assistance as th'

gineral director of your kitchen through Decimber?

Mrs. Pell. Yes, Mrs. O'Hara. The other eleven months of the year you would be comparatively free.

Bridget. Oi see. Do oi hov anny toime off in Decimber?

Mrs. Pell. I think we could arrange it if you should decide to come.

Bridget. Who does the cookin' fer the rist of the ladies and gintlemen that look afther your house?

Mrs. Pell. Well—I—I hadn't thought of that. I have always supposed that our cook—that is, our general kitchen director—would—

Bridget. Ye haven't been housekeepin' long, that's plain. Ye don't suppose that oi would cook me own meals, for instance, do yez?

Mrs. Pell. I really don't see why not.

Bridget. Do yez cook yer own?

Mrs. Pell. Of course not.

Bridget (*coldly*). Thin why should oi?

Mrs. Pell (*decisively*). Because you're a cook. That's why.

Bridget (*sharply*). Maginnis, take her away. Oi tould you oi wanted a civil impl'yer. Mrs. Dildancy Pill has a timper an' a sassy tongue. Show me that little blond lady on the ind seat. Oi t'ink oi'll try a greenhorn, an' teach her me ways.

Maginnis. Mrs. Perkins, please come this way.

[Mrs. Perkins *steps forward briskly. She has been watching what has gone before, first with apprehensive eyes, then with astonishment, and finally with wrath.*

Bridget. Phwat's yer na—

Mrs. Perkins (*suddenly*). Stand up when you speak to me.

Bridget (*with a nervous jump*). Phwat's that?

Mrs. Perkins. Stand up. I am not used to having servants sit while I am talking to them. [Bridget *slowly rises.*

Bridget. Sure, young lady, but yez have nerve—

Mrs. Perkins. Never mind what I have. I am here to find out what you have to offer. Do you want a place, or don't you?

[*Takes chair* Bridget *has vacated. The other ladies draw back in amazement and some consternation.*

Bridget. Sure oi do. (*Meekly at first, then, her courage returning.*) Oi'll have to shpeak about rifirences. Hov yez—

Mrs. Perkins. You certainly will if you expect to get a place in my house. (*Sharply.*) Why did you leave your last place?

Bridget (*subsiding*). Oi hoven't lift ut, ma'am. Oi'm just lookin' around.

Mrs. Perkins. Well — I need a cook and if you can cook and will cook and your references are satisfactory, I may take you. I have eight children, and keep only two other girls. We entertain

a great many people, and my husband is generally home for three meals a day.

Bridget (*sympathetically*). Out of a job, ma'am?

Mrs. Perkins (*ignoring the question*). We breakfast at seven, and when we don't have hot biscuits we have rice or buckwheat cakes; we live six miles from a railway station; and all the washing is done in the house — one-third by the cook, one-third by the waitress, and one-third by the up-stairs girl. The work is divided.

Bridget (*shrinking*). 'Tis rather hard, ma'am.

Mrs. Perkins. It's very hard, but the work has got to be done. I insist upon the kitchen being thoroughly scrubbed three times a week—

Bridget. Would oi have to look after the furnace, ma'am?

Mrs. Perkins. No—we have a man from outside to do that.

Bridget (*simpering*). So oi could count some on gintlemin's company—

Mrs. Perkins. Yes. Rastus is a gentleman, if his skin is black.

Bridget. Saints preserve us! a na—

Mrs. Perkins. Exactly. What wages have you been getting?

Bridget. Fifty dollars.

Mrs. Perkins. That's preposterous. I'm sure you're not worth it. No cook is. I shall not pay more than twenty.

Bridget. Well, thot's good—if ut's paid. Oi—oi don't get me fifty, ma'am, —oi'm only promised ut. Twinty in hand is worth a thousand that ye'll niver get. That's why oi'm lookin' fer a change.

Mrs. Perkins. I see.

Bridget. The boss spinds so much on his artymechoo-choo oi t'ink he's busted.

Mrs. Perkins. It often happens. Now as to days out—you can have every third Thursday from breakfast on, only you must clean up your kitchen before

you go. There will be no Sundays off at all—only Sunday afternoons. We have midday dinner on Sunday, but a cold supper, which the waitress can handle alone. This will give you every other Sunday afternoon and evening from four o'clock on. On the other Sundays you will have to wait at supper. Have you any references?

Bridget. Yis, ma'am.

Mrs. Perkins. Let me see them.

[Bridget *fumbles about in her dress and produces a bundle of letters.*

Mrs. Perkins. Mr. Maginnis, have these been looked up?

Maginnis. Y-yes, ma'am. I—I looked them up under the old system. They're all right.

Mrs. Perkins. Well, then (*to* Bridget) —er—what is your name?

Bridget. Mrs. O'Hara, ma'am.

Mrs. Perkins. I mean your first name

Bridget. Bridget.

Mrs. Perkins. Very well then, Bridget,

you may come to me this afternoon if you wish—twenty dollars, cooking, washing, and everything else as I have told you. What is it to be—yes or no?

Bridget (*hesitating between pride and humility*). Sure an' oi— Begorry, oi'll take the job, for oi like yez. (*With enthusiasm.*) Misther Maginnis, ye've kept your word. Ye've found the rale t'ing that oi've bin lookin' for.

Maginnis. I'm glad, Mrs. O'Hara, if my effort—

Bridget. Ah, shtop ut, Mike. Call me Bridget. That's (*nodding toward* Mrs. Perkins) a la-ady, but th' rest of 'em (*with scornful glances at line on camp-stools*), they's amachoors.

Mrs. Perkins (*looking at watch*). You'd better hurry, Bridget. Our train leaves at two-thirty, and it's twelve now. Foot of Twenty-third Street and North River. Be prompt, for I sha'n't wait for you.

Bridget. Yis, ma'am. Oi'll be there.

(*Walks to the door. As she gets there she turns and looks again at* Mrs. Perkins.) If there was more loike her, there'd be no domistic problem. It's thim imitation impl'yers that's roonin' the business. [*Exit.*

[Mrs. Perkins *drops in a chair, fainting. The others spring to her assistance.* Maginnis *gives her a glass of water and she revives.*

Mrs. Pell. It was wonderful. madam.

Mrs. Perkins (*faintly*). But—I—I'm not a bit like that, you know.

Maginnis. Well, Mrs. Perkins, it was a magnificent bluff. Keep it up and you'll never have any more trouble in getting and keeping a cook.

[Mrs. Perkins *smiles, rises, and walks to the door.* Maginnis *gazes after her admiringly.*

Mrs. Perkins. Good-morning.

Maginnis. Good - morning, madam. (*Bows.* Mrs. Perkins *exits.*) Ladies,

Bridget was right. You'd better make a note of it. That's the *real thing.*

[*Turns and goes to desk. Sits. The remaining ladies stiffen up, summon up their nerves. One of them laughingly tries her muscle. They all sit and gaze intently at the glass door like tigresses waiting to pounce upon their prey.*

CURTAIN

THE BARRINGTONS' "AT HOME"

THE BARRINGTONS' "AT HOME"

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE REVEREND EDWARD BARRINGTON, *the new minister.*
MRS. EDWARD BARRINGTON, *his wife.*
MRS. RICHARD DOWLING, *a masterful member of the congregation.*
JAMES, *the latter's hired man.*
JANE, *the Barringtons' maid.*

SCENE.—*The drawing-room of the parsonage at Wykeham-on-Hudson. It is three o'clock of a pleasant May afternoon. The curtain rising discloses the drawing-room daintily arranged for the minister's reception. At rear centre is a double door hung with portières. At left is a window, before which stands a piano. At right is a door leading into another*

room. A Shakespeare table with a lamp upon it stands in the corner alongside of the door. At right downstage is a fireplace and chimney-breast, with mantel-piece, on which stand several vases filled with sweet peas and some spring flowers. Over the mantel hangs a large engraving of "Washington Crossing the Delaware." On the opposite side of the room is a table with a white cloth, and tea things upon it. There are several chairs arranged about room. Mrs. Barrington *is seen bustling about attended by* Jane *and arranging bunches of flowers in various vases.*

Mrs. Barrington (*as she puts the finishing touches to a vase on the mantelpiece*). There, Jane, I think we have at last succeeded in bringing order out of chaos.

Jane. It certainly does look very nice, mim. More like home than it was, mim.

Mrs. Barrington. Much more, Jane. I thought we'd never do it. It was so cold and formal when we moved in last Wednesday it didn't look to me as if we could ever make a home of it. If you ever want to settle permanently anywhere, Jane, don't marry a minister.

Jane. I never will, mim.

Mrs. Barrington. It was worth whiie moving the piano. Did you pay the men?

Jane. Yes, mim. They charged fifty cents apiece just for shovin' it across the floor—the cheek of 'em!

Mrs. Barrington. It was worth it, Jane. It looked like a house standing in that other corner. I couldn't abide it!

Jane. Yes—and these pictures on the wall is much nicer than the ones they had. They ain't so solemnlike.

Mrs. Barrington. I think so. They are much daintier, anyhow.

[*Enter* The Reverend Edward Barrington *from side door.*

Barrington (*looking about the room with a smile of pleasure*). What a transformation! I'd hardly know it for the same room.

Mrs. Barrington. I am glad you are pleased, Edward, dear.

Barrington. Pleased is hardly the word. I'm ecstatically delighted. I didn't think it could ever be done. What a clever little woman you are! (*Kisses her.*) After all, it's the woman's touch that makes the home. When I think of what this parlor was and what it has become I am forced to admit that you are a genius.

Mrs. Barrington (*surveying her work with satisfaction*). You're a dear, good boy, Edward, but don't praise me too highly. It wasn't hard to improve the room, and I couldn't have made it any worse than it was.

Barrington. I agree with the latter

half of the proposition, my dear. I see you've moved the piano.

Mrs. Barrington. I hired two men to do it—it cost a dollar, but—

Barrington. It would have been cheap at two dollars. I nearly broke my neck over it as I came in through that door in the dark last night. What pretty flowers!

Mrs. Barrington. Aren't they? So fresh and delicate.

Barrington. So much better than those garish red and blue things you see so often. (*Looking around again.*) It's all as sweet and dainty as can be. That is—(*catching sight of the "Washington Crossing the Delaware" picture*)—all except—may I criticise just a little?

Mrs. Barrington. Certainly, Edward.

Barrington. Well, that picture. Poor old Washington crossing the Delaware gives me a nervous chill every time I look at him. I'm always afraid some Britisher will hit him in the eye with a snowball.

Mrs. Barrington (*laughing*). I feel the same way, Edward, but Jane and I couldn't very well get it down. It is too heavy.

Barrington (*taking off his coat*). Why, of course it is. That's a man's job. Jane, get me the step-ladder and I'll fix it.

Jane. Yes, Mr. Barrington.

[*Exit at door R.*

Barrington. What shall we put in its place, Edna? How about the Countess Potocka?

Mrs. Barrington. The very thing. I'll get it.

[*Exit and returns in a moment with the portrait.*

Barrington. Splendid. I'll have it up in a second. Always a favorite of mine.

[Jane *returns with step-ladder.* Barrington *places it in front of mantel and climbs up.*

Barrington (*leaning forward and grasping the Washington picture at both ends*).

Now, Mr. Washington, we'll have you down in a jiffy, and, mind you, your Excellency, there's no disrespect to you in this. (*Lifts picture.*) We—simply—don't like to—see you out—in—the—cold. That's all. (*All this while removing wire from hook.*) There. (*Hands picture down to* Jane.) Jane, put the General in a nice warm spot in the attic—next the chimney-flues. (*Exit* Jane *carrying picture.*) Where's the Potocka?

Mrs. Barrington. Here it is. (*Hands Potocka portrait to* Barrington.)

Barrington (*hanging it*). There, Countess. May your life here be happier than the one you led at home—poor child! How's that, Edna? All right?

Mrs. Barrington. Much better. It should be a little higher on the left—

Barrington (*turning it*). How's that?

Mrs. Barrington. That's right. You have a wonderfully accurate eye, Edward.

Barrington. Well, a clergyman after

many years of sobriety ought to be able to see straight. (*Comes down from ladder and looks at his hands. They are black with dust.*) Poor Washington—he hasn't even been dusted for years and years. What's become of those Rogers groups that used to seesaw on this mantel-piece?

Mrs. Barrington (*with a shudder*). I've hidden them away—in the linen-closet.

Barrington. Good! Here's hoping they may enjoy a long and uninterrupted rest. And how about the supper, dear? Did you order the café frappé from Tomlini?

Mrs. Barrington. Yes—and Jane and I have made a lot of lettuce sandwiches, and there are salted almonds, and instead of lemonade we're going to have some iced tea. Don't you think that's better?

Barrington. It's a positive relief, my dear. A positive relief. I am so tired

of lemonade, and sandwiches made of potted things, and all the outrageous combinations that make a church tea a sure forerunner of dyspepsia.

Mrs. Barrington. At any rate, ours will be different, and that's something.

Barrington. It will, and I fancy these dear, good people we have just come to serve will realize it in a moment. How can they help it? If it were not for my position I'd wager the changes you've made in this old mausoleum of a manse, changing it into a real homelike home, will open their eyes a bit.

[*Sits down and rubs his hands with satisfaction. Door-bell rings. Exit* Jane *to answer it.*

Mrs. Barrington. Dear me! I wonder who that can be! Certainly no callers.

Barrington. Our cards read that the reception would be at five, didn't they?

Mrs. Barrington. Yes; and it's only three now.

[*Enter* Jane, *followed by* Mrs. Dow-

ling. *The latter is short, slightly stout, and very self-confident.*

Jane. Mrs. Dowling, mim.

Mrs. Dowling (*effusively*). My dear Mrs. Barrington—I simply could not wait a moment longer. (*Kisses her.*) It is so awfully hard to get settled in a new house, particularly if it's an old one. How do you do, Mr. Barrington? Poor man! I suppose it's almost impossible for you to get to work on any new sermons until you get used to your new surroundings?

Barrington (*smiling*). I—I haven't tried yet, Mrs. Dowling. You know I have quite a number of old sermons on hand.

Mrs. Barrington (*protestingly*). He never writes one of them, Mrs. Dowling.

Mrs. Dowling (*laughing*). Oh, of course, I know all that talk about ministers' barrels of sermons is just a joke. Still, you will feel strange here for a little while. That's only natural.

And what do you suppose I've come for?

Barrington. You certainly don't need to explain that, Mrs. Dowling. Some errand of mercy, no doubt.

Mrs. Dowling (*removing her wrap*). I came because I felt sure you'd need somebody to help you fix up your drawing-room for this afternoon's reception; so I just ran in to see if I couldn't be of some assistance.

Mrs. Barrington. It is very good of you—

Barrington. Most kind of you, I'm sure.

Mrs. Dowling (*espying the piano*). Why—who put that piano there? It has always stood in the other corner.

Mrs. Barrington. So I believe, but I—

Mrs. Dowling. I suppose when Mr. Harkaway moved out some of those careless van men rolled it over there.

Mrs. Barrington. Why, no—I—

Mrs. Dowling. Fortunately my man

James came with me to carry a couple of —well, little surprises I have for you, dear (*to* Mrs. Barrington). I fancy James and Mr. Barrington are big and strong enough to restore it to where it belongs. (*Turning to door.*) James!

James (*appearing at doorway*). Yis, mum.

Mrs. Dowling. James, just remove that table and lamp from the corner and help Mr. Barrington push the piano back to where it belongs—over here.

James. Yis, mum. (*Begins to remove objects from small table.*)

Barrington. Oh no, Mrs. Dowling; I don't think—

Mrs. Dowling. It's no trouble at all, Mr. Barrington. James is used to it. Hurry, James—we haven't much time.

James. Yis, mum. (*He finishes table and sets it to one side.*) I guess I can push ut widout Mr. Barrington's help. (*Pushes, but unavailingly.*)

Barrington. The fact is, Mrs. Dowling, we—

Mrs. Dowling. I guess you'll have to help him, Mr. Barrington.

Barrington. But you see, Mrs. Dowling, Mrs. Barrington and I—

James (*as the piano begins to move*). Ah! There she goes. (*Rolls it across to the other corner, and stands awaiting further orders.* Barrington *looks helplessly at his wife.*)

Mrs. Dowling. Good—that looks much more natural.

Mrs. Barrington. Don't you think it is rather in the way there, Mrs. Dowling?

Mrs. Dowling. Possibly, but then it is farther from the window, Mrs. Barrington, and damp weather does so interfere with the tone of an instrument. Now, let me see—(*gazes about until her eye rests on the Potocka portrait*)—why, what has become of that picture of "Washington Crossing the Delaware" that used

to hang over the mantel-piece? Mrs. Harkaway didn't take that, did she?

Mrs. Barrington. No, Mrs. Dowling. It is up in the attic. When Mr. Barrington and I—

Mrs. Dowling. James—er—run up into the attic and get the picture of "Washington Crossing the Delaware" —a man in a boat surrounded by ice-cakes, James.

James (*shaking his head knowingly*). Oi know ut well, mum. [*Exit.*

Barrington. We don't like to bother James, Mrs. Dowling—er—er—

Mrs. Dowling. It isn't the slightest bother, Mr. Barrington—

Mrs. Barrington. But I don't really care for the picture, Mrs. Dowling.

Mrs. Dowling (*laughing merrily*). Neither do I, my dear—can't abide it—but you know it was the gift to the parsonage of Mrs. Bunce, years ago, and it has always hung there, and Mrs. Bunce is a very peculiar woman. Highly

sensitive and likely to feel herself slighted on the least pretext. She'd miss it, and you could hardly explain that you didn't like it, you know.

Barrington (*gloomily*). Not very well—

[James *returns with "Washington Crossing the Delaware."*

Mrs. Dowling. Thank you, James—now get a step-ladder and remove that other picture and put this one up in its place. (*Exit* James *after leaning Washington against the wall.*) I'm sure I don't know where that picture came from. (*Indicating the Potocka.*)

Mrs. Barrington. It belonged to—

Mrs. Dowling. It's hardly appropriate for a parsonage—pretty and decorative, but—er—a trifle flippant.

Barrington. I've rather liked that picture.

Mrs. Dowling. Oh, you good-natured ministers! Ha! ha! Just because you find a thing in a house, rather than hurt anybody's feelings you pretend to

like things you really hate. Diplomacy, eh?

Barrington. Not at all, Mrs. Dowling, I—

Mrs. Dowling. Perhaps you're afraid I gave that to the manse and—

Barrington. No, indeed. I never even dreamed of such a thing, because—

Mrs. Dowling. Because you know my taste? Thank you very much for a very pretty compliment. (*Enter* James *with step-ladder.*) Over here, James. (James *erects ladder in front of mantelpiece and mounts it.*) Steady now, James. (James *gets Potocka picture down.*) Mr. Barrington, will you take it and hand James the Washington? (Barrington *does so with a sigh of resignation.* James *proceeds to hang the Washington.*) Thanks. There—a little farther to the left, James—there—no—that's too much—down at this corner. There! That will do.

Mrs. Barrington. I'm glad you told

me about Mrs. Bunce. Did she give anything else, Mrs. Dowling?

Mrs. Dowling. No. That was all—

Barrington. I wonder who gave those Rogers groups—

Mrs. Dowling. Oh, yes, where are they? It would never do not to have them on the mantel-piece. I wonder where Mrs. Harkaway—

Mrs. Barrington (*ruefully*). Oh, they're not lost, Mrs. Dowling. They're up-stairs in the linen-closet.

Mrs. Dowling. James—run up to the linen-closet—

Barrington. I'll get them. (*Aside.*) And on my way down I'll fall and break them.

Mrs. Dowling. No, indeed. James is perfectly familiar with the house—

James (*with a grin*). I know it loike a buk! Oi've bin troo dhis before, sorr, manny's the toime.

Mrs. Dowling. James has settled at least five of our ministers here.

James. Lasht toime thim Rogers brothers was down in th' cellar forninst th' coal-bin. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Dowling. Yes—Mrs. Harkaway could not seem to understand why tact, if not taste, required that the legacy of old Colonel Barclay to the parsonage should occupy a place of honor in the drawing-room.

Barrington. Possibly she had ideas of art—

Mrs. Dowling. She had—she had been an art student, and the rude strength of Rogers never appealed to her over-cultivated taste. We ladies of the Dorcas had a very hard time bringing her around to our way of thinking. As long as Mrs. Barclay lived it certainly would have been a terrible thing to hide her husband's legacy as though it were not fit to be seen.

Mrs. Barrington. Very true. And is Mrs. Barclay still living.

Mrs. Dowling. No—

Barrington (*aside*). Good! I'm glad of that.

Mrs. Dowling. What say, Mr. Barrington?

Barrington. How very sad—I—er—never had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Barclay.

Mrs. Dowling. She was a strong woman and we miss her dreadfully—so masterful. But her two daughters, Marian and Esther, are still with us, and they would feel dreadfully hurt not to find the groups where they have always been.

[*Enter* James *with the groups.*

James. Where'll oi putt 'em?

Barrington. Why, suppose we place them on the table in the corner.

Mrs. Dowling. I think they'd better go just where they were, on the mantelpiece. One at each end, James—they always balanced very well.

[James *puts them on mantel as instructed.*

Mrs. Dowling. That's it.

Mrs. Barrington. Do *you* like them, Mrs. Dowling?

Mrs. Dowling. Well—yes and no. I think they are very interesting as specimens of—er—

Barrington. Early American struggles to realize an artistic ideal.

Mrs. Dowling. Beautifully expressed, Mr. Barrington. I wanted to say that and didn't know how.

Mrs. Barrington. I don't think a parsonage is exactly a museum for the preservation of art struggles, however.

Mrs. Dowling. No, Mrs. Barrington, but, after all, it should represent somewhat the tastes of the good people to whom it belongs and who are not backward in their efforts to beautify it. That was a point that Mrs. Harkaway, your predecessor, failed to grasp, and it resulted in some very difficult situations.

Mrs. Barrington. Oh, indeed; I can readily see that.

Barrington. Quite so.

Mrs. Dowling. But we are too sensible —people like ourselves who have ceased to be provincial—to add to the difficulties of church work by opposing our own broader views—

Mrs. Barrington (*hopelessly*). Oh, indeed, yes.

Mrs. Dowling. Sometimes acquiescence is a short-cut to happiness. And now, my dear, one other thing before I go. I just knew that with all the care and trouble of setting this house in order you wouldn't have much time to arrange for the tea and the flowers. So I've brought these peonies for you.

[*Opens box of flaming red flowers. Removes other flowers from vases and throws them into the waste-basket, and rearranges a gaudy selection of peonies, hollyhocks, etc., in their place.*

Mrs. Dowling. There — that gives color to the room, does it not?

Mrs. Barrington (*with a gulp*). Y-yes it—certainly does.

Barrington (*with an effort at cheerfulness*). Gorgeous.

Mrs. Dowling. James, bring in the hamper. [*Exit* James.

Mrs. Barrington. The hamper? Really, Mrs. Dowling, you are too kind.

Mrs. Dowling. Not at all—not at all, my dear. You don't know how I love to help.

[James *enters with hamper.*

Mrs. Dowling. Put it down here, James. (*Indicating space before her.* James *does so.* Mrs. Dowling *opens it.*) There, my dear. There is a gingerbread, two Washington pies, a bag of walnuts —your cook can crack them—and I'd have her put a little salt on them—the congregation are very fond of nuts.

Mrs. Barrington. It will be a common bond to unite us. I am, too.

Mrs. Dowling. So glad! And here is some potted tongue and chicken and

a couple of loaves of bread. Your maid can make sandwiches of them, and you will find them also very popular. The last time we gave a surprise-party to Mr. Harkaway we consumed two hundred and eight potted-chicken sandwiches—just think of it!

Barrington. Marvellous.

Mrs. Barrington. It is so nice to find out what our people like; isn't it, Edward?

Barrington. Quite so.

Mrs. Dowling. And this is a bottle of lemon-juice for the lemonade. You ought to like that, Mr. Barrington (*coyly*), for I squeezed the lemons with my own fair hands.

Barrington. Then we shall be able to economize on sugar, Mrs. Dowling.

Mrs. Dowling. Now, now! You mustn't make yourself too popular with the ladies, Mr. Barrington. Now let me see —oh, yes—here are two dozen Japanese paper napkins, and Mrs. Bunce is going

to send over a pot of jam and two bottles of pickles, so you'll be very well provided with things to eat and needn't worry your poor head any further on that score.

Mrs. Barrington (*faintly*). I had ordered some café frappé from—

Mrs. Dowling. I wouldn't waste it on them, my dear child. You know I've been all through this so many times—you are the fifth young couple I've broken in—and I know exactly what the Wykeham people like. That gingerbread won't last five minutes, and the lemonade—mercy! Well, just you wait and see.

Barrington. You've been most awfully kind, Mrs. Dowling, to take so much trouble.

Mrs. Dowling. There, there, Mr. Barrington. Trouble's a pleasure. Mercy me—it's four o'clock! How time *does* fly! I must be running home to dress. I wonder if this room is exactly right.

Piano—Washington—Rogers—I wonder where Mrs. Dido's wax flowers are.

Barrington. Wax flowers? Edna, have you seen any of Mrs. Dido's wax flowers?

Mrs. Barrington (*aside*). Hush, Edward—please.

Mrs. Dowling (*searching about*). They were tiger-lilies and pond-lilies under a glass cover. (*Looks under table.*) She'd be heartbroken if they weren't where they always were on the centre-table. Made 'em herself, you know.

Mrs. Barrington (*at door*). Jane, look up in the attic and see if there are some wax flowers—pond-lilies and tiger-lilies under a glass cover.

Mrs. Dowling (*on her knees before sofa and looking under it*). Ah—this looks like it. (*Hauls out huge oval platter with glass cover.*) Yes, these are they. Who could have put them there? Mercy! what a narrow escape. (*Removes vase from centre-table and places*

the wax flowers thereon.) Mrs. Dido would never have forgotten it, and she is so necessary to the church.

Barrington (*hollowly*). So glad they were found.

Mrs. Dowling. So am I. Even "Washington Crossing the Delaware" missing would have been better than those pond-lilies in hiding. And now, good-bye, dear. (*Kisses* Mrs. Barrington.) Don't worry—I'm sure your reception will be a great success, and the whole congregation will appreciate your loving tact in changing the old manse about so little. Au revoir.

[*Waves her hand and goes out.* Barrington *escorts her to door.* Mrs. Barrington *throws herself in her chair and gazes ruefully about.* Barrington *returns.*

Barrington. My dear, how did our cards read, anyhow?

Mrs. Barrington. The Reverend and Mrs. Barrington—

Barrington. Yes?

Mrs. Barrington. AT HOME! (*Looks about her. Sighs.*) That's the way you wrote it, Edward.

Barrington. I was afraid so, dear. I was afraid so. (*Gazes around the room. Looks at wax flowers and sighs deeply as he sits and taps his fingers together.*) At home! (*Pauses.*) Edna, that's the first lie I ever told in all my life.

CURTAIN

THE RETURN OF CHRISTMAS

THE RETURN OF CHRISTMAS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

EDWARD RANDOLPH, *a man of railroads and trusts.*
MRS. EDWARD RANDOLPH, *a social leader.*
THOMAS RANDOLPH, *their son, a real boy.*
MABEL RANDOLPH, *their daughter, a real girl.*
MISS WOODBRIDGE, *a proxy mother.*
GRIMMINS, *a butler.*
SANTA CLAUS, *an incident.*

SCENE.—*The drawing-room of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Randolph. It is luxuriously appointed. As the curtain rises, enter* Mrs. Randolph.

TIME.—*Christmas Eve.*

Mrs. Randolph. I am really quite excited at the prospect of seeing the children again. Let me see, when was it I saw Tommy last—was it Decoration

Day or the Fourth of July? (*A pause.*) No, it was—oh, well, the date is of no importance; and Mabel—she was a pretty little thing, and it will be a real pleasure to see her once more.

Enter Randolph.

Mrs. Randolph (*languidly*). Ah, Edward, howdido?

Randolph. Very well, my dear. And you?

Mrs. Randolph. So so. Did you arrange with Santa Claus?

Randolph. Yes. He'll be here on time. (*Looks at watch.*) Ought to be along in about five minutes. I trust that the children will appear promptly. I have an important deal on with Judge Astorbilt at ten o'clock. If it was any other night than Christmas Eve, I wouldn't have come home.

Mrs. Randolph. I wish it might have been postponed, too. I have a bridge-party at nine.

Randolph. Oh, well, it won't take

long, if we don't talk too much. (*Lights a cigarette.*) Have one?

Mrs. Randolph. No, thank you. I prefer my own; and, besides, I've given up smoking. Would you mind pressing the button for Grimmins, Edward?

Randolph. Certainly. (*Presses button.*) Grimmins was very much pleased with his present.

Mrs. Randolph. What did you give him?

Randolph. Check for twenty-five hundred. He preferred it to a motor.

Enter Grimmins.

Grimmins. Did you ring, madam?

Mrs. Randolph. Yes, Grimmins. I wish you would go to the children's apartments and tell Miss Woodbridge to bring Master Thomas and Miss Mabel here at once.

Grimmins. Yes, madam.

Randolph. And, by the way, Grimmins, if a gentleman named Santa Claus calls this evening, I shall be at home.

Grimmins. Very good, sir. And, by the way, sir, if I may make so bold as to speak of a small matter—

Randolph. Certainly, Grimmins. What is it?

Grimmins (*taking check from his pocket*). This check, sir—I think you must have made a mistake. It's for twenty-five hundred dollars, sir—

Randolph. That is the sum I designed to give you, Grimmins.

Grimmins. I understand that, sir, but it's drawn on a Wilmington trust company, sir—

Randolph. Well? It's a solvent company, Grimmins.

Grimmins. I don't doubt it, sir; but my bank charges two dollars and a half for collection, sir, and I thought possibly you—

Randolph. Oh, I see. Of course, Grimmins. My mistake. Here's the two-fifty. Anything else? (*Hands him the money.*)

"OF COURSE, GRIMMINS. MY MISTAKE"

Grimmins. No, sir. (*He takes the money.*) Thank you, sir. I will tell Miss Woodbridge, madam. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Randolph. What a careful man Grimmins is!

Randolph. Yes. Very little escapes his vigilant eye. I don't know how I came to overlook the exchange on that check.

Mrs. Randolph. I fancy it's because you never think in sums under a thousand, Edward.

Enter Grimmins.

Grimmins. Miss Woodbridge!

[*Enter* Miss Woodbridge. *Exit* Grimmins.

Mrs. Randolph. You come alone, Miss Woodbridge? Where are the children?

Miss Woodbridge. I regret to say that they are not quite ready, Mrs. Randolph. You see—

Mrs. Randolph. But I told you to have them here sharp at eight o'clock. This is very annoying. Both Mr. Ran-

dolph and I have other engagements for this evening.

Randolph. It's deuced inconvenient for me, Miss Woodbridge. I can't have my business affairs interfered with by carelessness in my household.

Miss Woodbridge. I am very sorry, sir, but it is not my fault. The children escaped from the motor this afternoon, while I was in Dorlinger's buying the sables for the cook, and I was unable to find them until nearly seven o'clock, sir.

Mrs. Randolph. My dear Miss Woodbridge! Do you mean to tell me that my children—

Miss Woodbridge. They are perfectly safe, madam. With the aid of the police I found them in the toy department at Pennypacker's.

Mrs. Randolph. Dear, dear, dear! Pennypacker's, of all places in the world! After two hours of contact with— (*Shudders.*) Ugh!

Miss Woodbridge. I am sorry, madam;

but they disobeyed my strict orders, and Williamson was busy under the machine looking for the—

Mrs. Randolph. No doubt, Miss Woodbridge; but do you realize that by this contact with the—the proletariat, they may have acquired germs that will expose us all to—

Miss Woodbridge. Their clothing has all been fumigated, madam, and both children have had an antiseptic bath. I have done all I could, and Doctor Jarley has told me over the telephone that he doesn't think you need worry.

Randolph. I guess Jarley is right, Amanda. I come into contact with the proletariat myself every day on the Subway, and so far—

Mrs. Randolph. You are a great, strong man, Edward; and, besides, you've had the mumps, the measles, and the whooping-cough.

Miss Woodbridge. So have the children, madam.

Mrs. Randolph. What? My children —the measles, mumps, and whooping-cough? When, Miss Woodbridge?

Miss Woodbridge. Yes, madam. I wrote you a note about it and gave it to Grimmins to deliver—last October was the mumps period. The whooping-cough was while you were in Paris last spring.

Mrs. Randolph. You should have come and told me yourself, Miss Woodbridge.

Miss Woodbridge. I did not wish to expose you unnecessarily.

Randolph. Very considerate, I'm sure. That explains Jarley's last quarterly bill. He charged eighteen hundred dollars for twenty-eight visits last October. I meant to ask who had been ill, but in the trouble over the reorganization of M., P., & W. I forgot it.

Mrs. Randolph. Well, I should have been told less informally. Hereafter, Miss Woodbridge, I shall have to

trouble you to make your nursery reports monthly, instead of semi-annually, as heretofore.

Enter Grimmins.

Grimmins. Master Thomas Randolph and Miss Mabel Randolph!

[*The children enter and stand awkwardly at the door. Exit* Grimmins.

Miss Woodbridge. Come in, children, and meet your parents. Mrs. Randolph, this is your son, Thomas. Mabel, let me introduce you to your father.

Mrs. Randolph (*holding out her left hand to Tommy*). Glad to see you again, my son.

Tommy. Madam, the pleasure is mine.

Mabel (*to* Randolph). Your face is very familiar to me, father. Haven't we met before?

Randolph (*laughing*). By Jove! Mab, I think we have—

Mabel. At Newport or Lenox, I think it was. Anyhow, you were pointed out

to me as my father, and I was quite interested. I wasn't sure I had one.

Tommy. He isn't your father, Mabel. He's mine. Miss Woodbridge said so.

Miss Woodbridge. He belongs to both of you, Thomas.

Tommy. Good. I like his looks. (*Goes up and shakes hands with* Randolph.) By the way, father, have you met my mother? Mother, this is father.

Mrs. Randolph. I congratulate you, Miss Woodbridge, upon the children's manners. They are quite *au fait.* Come here, Mabel.

Mabel (*hesitating*). Shall I, Miss Woodbridge?

Miss Woodbridge. Certainly, Mabel. The lady is your mother.

Mabel. Oh, I am so glad! I've always wanted to see my mother. I wonder if I might kiss her?

Mrs. Randolph. Why—yes, dear, if you want to. (*They kiss each other.*)

You must not permit the children to be too demonstrative, Miss Woodbridge.

Miss Woodbridge. I do all I can to discourage it, madam.

Mrs. Randolph (*leaning wearily back in her chair*). Edward, you had better acquaint the children with the object of this meeting.

Randolph. Certainly, my dear. Children, this is Christmas Eve—

Miss Woodbridge. I have explained that to them, Mr. Randolph.

Randolph. Good. That saves time. (*To children.*) I have arranged to have Mr. Santa Claus call this evening with a varied assortment of Christmas gifts for you to choose from.

Tommy. Fine!

Mrs. Randolph (*to* Tommy). Curb yourself, my child. Enthusiasm of any sort is bad form. Go on, Edward.

Randolph. And as your mother and I have very important engagements for the evening — business engagements—

your mother at bridge and I at a directors' meeting of the Chloroform Trust—I must ask you to make your selections quickly.

Mabel. We will, father.

Tommy. You can count on me, sir. I know what I don't like.

Randolph. We are going to let you choose them yourselves in order that there may be no dissatisfaction afterward.

Tommy. That's great!

Mrs. Randolph. Thomas!

Tommy. Very kind of you, I'm sure, Mr. Randolph.

[*Door-bell rings.*

Randolph (*looking at his watch*). I fancy that is Santa Claus now.

Enter Grimmins.

Grimmins. Mr. Santa Claus!

[*Enter* Santa Claus. *He is clad in full evening-dress, of the most modern style—swallow-tail coat, patent-leather shoes, white vest,*

and creased trousers. He is dapper to the last degree, but in face and figure still the same old Santa. *He carries a suit-case in his hand.*

Randolph. Good-evening, sir. May I present you to Mrs. Randolph?

Mrs. Randolph. I am glad to see you, Mr. Claus.

Santa Claus (*bowing politely*). I wish you all a very merry Christmas.

Mrs. Randolph. Say rather a peaceful Christmas, Mr. Claus. Merriment is hardly—

Santa Claus. True, madam. I accept the amendment. May your Christmas be most placid—or shall I say a good investment, Mr. Randolph?

Randolph (*looking at his watch*). Well, now, Claus, we'll drop persiflage and begin business. It's getting late, and we have work to do. Suppose we hustle this business along. These are the children I wrote you about. I've forgotten how old they are—

Mrs. Randolph. How old are they, Miss Woodbridge?

Miss Woodbridge. I haven't got the data with me, but I can run up-stairs and get it.

Santa Claus. Oh, never mind. I can tell by looking at them about what will do for them. Howdido, children?

Tommy. Howdido?

Mabel. Pretty well, I thank you. How are you?

Santa Claus. Fine!

Tommy. No enthusiasm, please, Mr. Claus. Mother doesn't like it.

Randolph. Go ahead and show your goods, Claus, and remember I don't stint you as to prices.

Mrs. Randolph. That's a trifle incautious, Edward. It seems to me that there should be a limit.

Santa Claus. It would expedite matters to know what you are willing to spend, Mr. Randolph. There is the cheap and happy Christmas; there is

the expensive Christmas—showy, but inconvenient after New Year's; and—

Randolph. Oh, well, say—seventy-five thousand dollars. I made several good turns in the market to-day.

Santa Claus. For both?

Mrs. Randolph. Apiece.

Randolph. Make it a hundred thousand, if you want to.

[Santa Claus *opens suit-case and takes out a large book full of architectural drawings and a bundle of papers.*

Santa Claus. I have here the deeds of a number of houses at Bar Harbor, Lenox, and Newport, ranging from sixty to a hundred and twenty thousand dollars. No. 17 is very pretty—well plumbed, finished throughout in buhl and Chippendale, and conveniently located. (*Hands pictures to* Mrs. Randolph, *who turns to No.* 17.)

Mrs. Randolph. Very pretty, but hardly suitable for a child, do you think?

I'm sure that the children are under sixteen.

Santa Claus. That all depends on the way you look at it, madam. If the children entertain a great deal or have an expensive guardian, or desire occasionally to receive their parents for little week-end parties, a house like that would be very nice.

Randolph. What 'll it cost to run it?

Santa Claus. It can be done simply on seventy-five thousand a year.

Randolph. I try to instil into their minds that they ought to get along on five thousand dollars a month apiece, Mr. Claus. That is only sixty thousand a year.

Tommy. Well, I don't want it at all. I'd rather have a stable.

Mabel. Neither do I, father. I am having enough trouble with my studies without adding the cares of an establishment.

Mrs. Randolph. You are a very sensible child, Mabel.

Randolph (*with a laugh*). That seems to settle the house business, Claus.

Santa Claus. It's as you say, sir. I aim to please. We are advertised by our loving friends. (*Puts books and deeds away.*)

Randolph (*aside to* Santa). Just leave that hundred - and - twenty - thousand-dollar Bar Harbor property here, Claus. I'll put it in Mrs. Randolph's stocking myself.

Santa Claus (*aside*). All right. You'll never regret it, sir. (*Aloud.*) What would you think of an opera-box, Thomas? I have one for thirty thousand dollars.

Tommy. I'd rather have a music-box for thirty cents.

Randolph. Gad! He's a clever boy. I've made that same distinction myself.

Mrs. Randolph. Don't be vulgar, Thomas.

Santa Claus (*holding up a large pearl necklace, each pearl of which is as large as a marrowfat pea*). How would this do for the little girl?

Mrs. Randolph (*taking it and inspecting it closely*). It is very beautiful. What perfectly matched pearls!

Santa Claus. You couldn't duplicate it, madam, for fifty thousand dollars.

Mabel (*aside to* Tommy). Have I got to take it?

Tommy (*aside to* Mabel). No. Don't you do it. They aren't big enough to play marbles with.

Randolph. Well, Mabel, what do you say?

Mabel. They're too small, father.

Randolph (*aside*). Great Scott! Too small!

Mrs. Randolph. You are difficult to please, my child.

Mabel. I'd prefer them as big as china-alleys.

Mrs. Randolph. Mercy, Miss Wood-

bridge, where has Mabel got such extravagant ideas?

Tommy (*laughing, aside to* Mabel). We got 'em at the marble counter at Pennypacker's, didn't we?

Mabel. Of course I'll take them, father, if you wish, but I'd rather not, unless the pearls are larger.

Santa Claus. How will this one do? (*Takes out a necklace with pearls as large as agates.*)

Tommy. Dandy!

Mabel. I should like that, father.

Mrs. Randolph (*looking at* Mabel *through her lorgnette*). What a remarkable child!

[Santa Claus *hands* Mabel *the necklace. She hands it to* Tommy, *who plumps himself down on the floor, breaks the string, and shakes the pearls from it.* Santa Claus *laughs quietly.*

Mrs. Randolph. Thomas, do be careful! Are they really pearls, Mr. Claus?

Santa Claus. Yes, madam, and so absolutely flawless that even an expert cannot tell them from the imitation.

Mabel (*sitting on floor two yards away from* Tommy, *and facing him*). It's all right, mother. We only wanted them to play marbles with. (Tommy *rolls half the pearls over to her.*)

Mrs. Randolph (*shows signs of faintness, and puts smelling-salts to her nose*). Marbles! Miss Woodbridge

Santa Claus (*aside*). They are human, after all!

Randolph (*pridefully*). Gad, that boy handles pearls as if they were railroads!

Mrs. Randolph. But, Edward, are you going to permit your children to play marbles with—(*gasps*)—with pearls?

Randolph (*as* Tommy *flicks a pearl across to where* Mabel *has set three others in a row, missing them*). Well, my dear, of course I'd rather they'd play marbles with marbles, but—well, blood will tell.

Tommy (*making a second effort to score*

"ARE YOU GOING TO PERMIT YOUR CHILDREN TO PLAY MARBLES WITH PEARLS?"

and again missing). Oh, pshaw! These aren't any good. They're too light. Say, father, can't we swap them off for a hundred dollars' worth of real miggs?

Mrs. Randolph. Miggs! What a plebeian word!

Randolph (*kneeling beside* Tommy). Let me try it, my son. (*Flicks a pearl across the room.*) You are perfectly right. They are too light. Claus, have you got any real marbles for the children?

Santa Claus. Not at that price, sir.

Randolph. Money is no object with us. What would the best bag of marbles in all the world cost?

Santa Claus. About a dollar and a half

Tommy. Whoopee! That's what *I* want, father!

Randolph. You shall have them, my son.

Santa Claus (*reaching down into the suit-case*). I always carry them for an

emergency. (*Produces red flannel bag bulging with marbles.*)

Mabel (*gathering up the pearls*). Here are your pearls, Mr. Claus. I think I'd like a bag of marbles, too.

Mrs. Randolph. Possibly a set of books would do better for a young lady. Have you a set of—er—George Eliot, or —er—de Maupassant in tree-calf, Mr. Claus?

Mabel. Or *Little Red Riding-Hood* in a yellow-and-red shiny cover? I saw a *Little Red Riding-Hood* at Penny-packer's, mother, and really I liked it better than Mrs. Humphry Ward, even.

Randolph (*aside*). By Jingo, I didn't know I had such interesting children!

Santa Claus. I have the *Little Red Riding-Hood*—but again the price may—

Randolph. Confound it, let the child have it! I'll buy it if I have to sell a couple of railroads to pay for it. What's the tax, Claus?

Santa Claus. Seventy-five cents.

Randolph. It's a bargain!

[Santa Claus *takes the book from his suit-case and hands it to* Mabel, *who immediately walks to her mother's side and places the book, open, on her mother's lap.*

Mabel. Would you like to look at the pictures, Mrs. Randolph?

Mrs. Randolph (*stroking* Mabel's *hair*). Yes—dear. Only don't call me that.

Mabel. But you are that, aren't you?

Mrs. Randolph. Yes, but I'm also your mother. I had a mother, too, once —oh, a great many years ago! I used to call her "dearie."

Mabel. That's very pretty. Maybe when we get better acquainted I can call you "dearie," too.

Mrs. Randolph. Yes — and perhaps if you began to practise it now—

Mabel. I will—dearie. It comes awfully easy—doesn't it? (*Climbs into her mother's lap and kisses her*). Now we can look at the pictures together.

Enter Grimmins.

Grimmins. The car is at the door, madam.

Mrs. Randolph. The car?

Randolph. Yes — you are going to the Hawkins' for bridge, aren't you?

Mabel. Don't you do it, dearie. Stay here and read to me, won't you?

Mrs. Randolph. Why, Mabel, dear, I —I—why, yes, of course I will. I—I don't think I shall go out to-night, Edward. Miss Woodbridge, will you please write a note and send it to Mrs. Hawkins by Williamson, saying that I —that I am detained at home to-night, and shall be unable to join her party at bridge?

Miss Woodbridge. Yes, Mrs. Randolph. [*Exit.*

Santa Claus (*gathering up his stuff and closing the bag with a smile*). I am afraid, Mr. Randolph, that I got the wrong line on these children of yours. I'll go out and get my other pack.

Randolph. All right!

Santa Claus. I sha'n't be a minute.

[*Exit.*

Tommy (*on the floor*). Say, Randolph, let's have a game!

Randolph. What's that you call me, you young rascal?

Tommy. Why, it's your name, isn't it?

Randolph. Not to you, Mr. Saucebox. My name to you, sir, from this time on is "daddy." Understand? D-a-d-d-y, daddy.

Tommy. All right, daddy. Say—you can call me Tommy, if you like.

[*They begin a game of marbles.* Santa Claus *returns. This time he is dressed in his fur coat, and he has sleigh-bells around his waist, a fur cap, and all the other attributes of the* Santa Claus *of old. He plants a big pack of toys on the floor and leaves the room again.*

Mabel (*tapping pages of Little Red Riding-Hood*). Read that, dearie.

Mrs. Randolph (*reading*). "Once upon a time there was a little girl—"

Tommy. Here now—fen dubs! You got to play fair, daddy.

Randolph. I—I was thinking of something else, Tommy. You'll have to excuse me if I break the rules—it's so long since—

[*Enter* Santa Claus, *carrying a Christmas-tree covered with spangles, lustres, etcetera.*

Santa Claus. There, Mr. Randolph. That completes the lay-out!

Randolph. Fine! Like old times—eh, Amanda?

Mrs. Randolph. Oh, isn't it beautiful, Mabel?

Mabel. It ain't as beautiful as you are. (*Hugs her mother.*)

Santa Claus. I don't know how I came to make so many mistakes in the beginning, children.

Tommy. Don't mention it, Santa Claus. You're all right. You've de-

livered the goods, and now that you've changed your clothes you look like the real thing!

Mabel. Only, next time get your things at Pennypacker's, Mr. Claus. They know children there.

Randolph. I guess they do—I guess they do. It's all my fault, Claus. I've been studying markets exclusively lately, and haven't had a line on the youngsters for too long a time.

Mrs. Randolph. We didn't know ourselves, Mr. Claus, until a minute ago.

Santa Claus. Well, it's all right, anyhow. The whole four of you have got the best Christmas anybody could have —that's the old-timer, and I'm just as glad to see it back as you are. Good-night, Tommy!

Tommy (*rising and shaking hands with* Santa Claus). Good-night, sir. Always glad to see you. Wouldn't mind if you came once a month!

Mabel. Good-night, Mr. Claus. Thank

you for the beautiful book—I'd rather have it than anything else I know of. (*Runs to him and kisses him.* Santa Claus *salutes all, and exit.*)

Enter Grimmins.

Grimmins. A telephone from Judge Astorbilt at the Castoria, sir. He would like to know when you will be down.

Randolph. Great Scott! I'd forgotten all about the Chloroform Trust. Tell him—

Mrs. Randolph. Is it so very important, Edward?

Randolph (*hesitating*). Well, no. Only two or three millions in it for me. Er—Grimmins!

Grimmins. Yes, sir.

Randolph. Tell them to tell Judge Astorbilt that I am unexpectedly detained at home by important matters. Important matters, mind you—I'll skin you yet, Tommy!—and that I'll see him at my office the day after to-morrow—

no, by Jove, *not* the day after to-morrow, but the day after New Year's.

Grimmins. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Enter Miss Woodbridge.

Miss Woodbridge. It is time you were in bed, Thomas. Come, Mabel.

Mrs. Randolph. Not to-night, Miss Woodbridge—we'll let them stay up to-night.

Tommy. Fen inching there!

Mrs. Randolph. And you need not wait up, Miss Woodbridge. I—I will put the children to bed myself to-night. I wish you a merry Christmas!

Miss Woodbridge. Good-night, madam. The same to you. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Randolph. Come back here on my lap, Mabel, dear. We *must* go on with this exciting story, and learn what happened to *Little Red Riding-Hood.*

Mabel. Begin at the beginning, dearie, and I'll pay you a kiss a page; and here's a half-dozen in advance.

Mrs. Randolph. Thank you, dear, and here is your change. (*Kisses* Mabel *three times, smiles, and begins reading*). "Once upon a time there was a little girl who lived on the edge of a wood, and her grandmother—"

CURTAIN

THE SIDE-SHOW

THE SIDE-SHOW

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MR. GASSAWAY, *a lecturer.*
TINY, *the Titanic Dwarf. Height, six feet two inches.*
SAWDOFF, *The Diminutive Giant. Height, four feet five inches.*
MADEMOISELLE OUTASIGHTI, *The Invisible Soprano.*
PROFESSOR HIRSUTUS, *the Bearded Man.*
SIGNOR DEL FATTO, *the Living Skeleton. Weight* 280 *pounds.*
MO-MO, *the Boy with the Human Face.*
IGNOTA, *the Domestic Wonder.*
MADAME PANINI, *the Culinary Curio.*
AMANDA, *the Pheminine Phenomenon.*

Scene—*The proscenium arch of an improvised theatre. The curtain rising shows a space of four feet in depth, full width of stage, at the rear of which hang curtains, divided at centre like portières, of "The Great and Only Gassaway's Freak Show." Two lads stand facing audience, holding portières.*

Enter Mr. Gassaway. *He is a man of considerable nerve, unctuous in manner and in general appearance resembles a mixture of the unappreciated tragedian and a politician in a lean year. He is armed with a rattan cane.*

Gassaway. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my proud privilege this evening to introduce to your notice the greatest aggregation of social marvels that has ever been gathered together in any known period of history, or at any place that is now to be found upon any of the recognized maps of the earth. It is not excelled anywhere—not even in this glorious country of ours, which the poet has so aptly termed "the Home of the Brave and the Land of the Freak." What their cost to me has been I can only intimate to you by saying that I keep them insured for six million nine hundred and forty-three thousand four hundred and seventy-seven dollars and

sixty-three cents. This includes life, fire, and burglar insurance, for which in premiums alone I pay eight hundred and ninety-eight thousand dollars per annum. (*A crash as of broken glass is heard without.* Gassaway *starts nervously and clutches his forehead with his left hand.*) Excuse me just one moment.

[*Exit* Gassaway. *His voice is heard outside.*

What's that? Great Scott—Jones, if this happens again I'll discharge you.

[Gassaway *re-enters, calling back into the wings.*

Such outrageous carelessness! (*Turning to audience.*) I am sorry to have to announce, ladies and gentlemen, that through the carelessness of one of my stage-hands our world-famous Bridgetine, the Maid That Never Breaks Anything, secured at a cost of $60,000, has tripped over a hassock on the floor and broken all the glass and

china ware in the house. I doubt if the material can be repaired in time for this evening's performance, although I have on hand a few bottles remaining of my famous Liquid Stick-fast, warranted to hold inseparably together any two articles desired to be made fast to each other, for sale at ten cents a bottle. (*Takes bottle from pocket and holds it up between his thumb and fore-finger.*) It is an excellent household preparation, and, as evidence of its power, let me tell you that the Sultan of Bangabang in India last year, in order to test its efficacy, placed a drop of it on the tip end of the tails of two elephants, the which, when placed together and held for two minutes, the elephants themselves, each weighing thirty tons, were unable to pull apart. We were compelled subsequently to cut the elephants' tails off in order that they might be returned to their usual occupation of drawing the Sultan's au-

tomobile. Any lady desiring a bottle of this incomparable preparation for the mending of furniture, broken china, or keeping her husband at home nights by sprinkling it on his chair, will please apply at the box-office on the way out, or notify the ushers, who are authorized to take orders for Gassaway's Invincible Adhesive. It is especially recommended for fastening postage-stamps on letters.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, for our exhibition. The first of the freaks which I will show you is the world-famous Tiny, the Titanic Dwarf. He was captured on the Congo four years ago by my agents, who had been instructed to spare no expense in securing for me something novel in the way of dwarfs. I think you will agree with me that in Titanic Tiny they have succeeded in unearthing a dwarf unlike any other dwarf you have ever seen before. Curtain.

[*The boys draw the curtains aside. Behind them is a small dais surrounded on all sides by dark hangings. On the dais stands* Tiny, the Titanic Dwarf. *He is black as the ace of spades, and has a grin as wide almost as space. He stands six feet two inches in his stockings and is broad in proportion.*

Look at him, ladies and gentlemen, and tell me if in any other aggregation of astonishing actualities you have ever beheld a dwarf of his dimensions? Look at his stature. Glance at those proportions, and with your hand on your heart state to me the real truth. Was there ever before a dwarf of his height, breadth, depth, and general thickness? (*Raps him on the head with his rattan stick, producing a hard, wooden sound.*) You have seen dwarfs two feet high, possibly even three feet nine inches, but when or where have you encountered

one who from top to toe measures six feet two inches? I offer ten thousand dollars in gold to any purchaser of my famous adhesive who will produce another dwarf who is his equal in all respects. You will find his photograph on sale in the lobby at ten cents apiece. Curtain.

[*The boys lower the curtain. A tall man rises in the audience.*

Tall Man. I'll take that $10,000, Mr. Gassaway. I'm a dwarf myself. I don't look it, but I am.

Gassaway. You do look it, sir—but have you purchased any of my Liquid Invincible Adhesive?

Tall Man. No, sir.

Gassaway. Then I regret to inform you, sir, that you are not eligible. I distinctly said, to any purchaser of my famous Gumstickum. Moreover, you are not his equal. Socially you are his superior. Our next exhibit, ladies and gentlemen, is equally marvellous—Sawd-

off, the Diminutive Giant, the shortest ogre in the universe. Curtain.

[*The boys draw the curtains aside and* Sawdoff *is revealed standing upon the dais. He is not more than four feet five inches in height. He scowls fearfully, and twirls a fierce-looking club in his hands.*

There you are, ladies and gentlemen—a veritable ogre. He was found on the back steppes of Russia by a party of mining engineers engaged in building a trans-Ural subway connecting Bombay with St. Petersburg. After devouring ten members of the expedition, for he is a Cannibal, he was captured and incarcerated in a cage. Biting his way through the bars, he escaped, and to gratify his insatiable appetite ate seventeen rods of surveyors' chains, five telescopes, the tonneau of the chief-engineer's automobile, and drank sixteen gallons of wood gasolene. The latter threw him into such a stupor that

he was recaptured without difficulty, sent to a reform school in New York, and is now quite tame. You have seen giants of great height in the past, perhaps, but never one as short as he. He considers brevity the soul of wit and—

Sawdoff (*rolling his eyes hungrily*). Pst!

Gassaway. What is it, Sawdoff?

[Sawdoff *whispers in* Gassaway's *ear, and grins, pointing out at the audience.*

Gassaway. He says he is very hungry, ladies and gentlemen, and he wonders if any kind lady in the audience will let him have a nice, fat, little grilled boy or girl, not more than two years old, for luncheon? He promises to eat it very tenderly. (*A pause.*) Such an opportunity is not likely to occur again, ladies and gentlemen, let me assure you.

[Sawdoff *gazes hungrily out at audience, smacking his lips in anticipation.*

Maybe some of you would give him one of your neighbor's children—anything at all in the way of a nice, fat, juicy baby will satisfy him? (*A pause.*) It's a wonderful sight— No? Well, Sawdoff, I observe a slight inclination on the part of the audience not to oblige you. You'll have to content yourself with one of the ushers after the show is over. I'll pick out a nice tender one for you, so don't worry.

[Sawdoff *weeps.*

Gassaway. Curtain. (*Boys let down curtains.*) You see how gentle the poor fellow is. (Gassaway *wipes his own eyes as if much affected.*) It hurts him deeply to find such a lack of confidence in him. Fact is, it crops out everywhere, and for the three years I have had him I've been utterly unable to secure a baby of any kind, fat or otherwise, for his luncheon. Parents seem to be afraid it will hurt the little ones, failing to note that he swallows them whole,

without the painful process of chewing. Numerous maiden aunts and mothers-in-law have been offered freely, but never an infant, and Sawdoff feels the situation keenly. If you would get some idea of the effect of this diet upon his digestion, just try to eat a couple of maiden aunts and a mother-in-law some day yourself, and you'll see. But enough of the trials of Sawdoff. I take a peculiar pride in my next exhibit, ladies and gentlemen. I have been in the show business for thirty-seven years and never have I seen anything like this Pheminine Phenomenon about to be shown to you. Mr. Flammerstein, the eminent impresario of New York, has offered me two hundred thousand dollars for her, but I would not let her go for ten times that amount. Curtain, boys.

[*Boys draw curtains aside. A young girl of twenty one or two stands on the dais, smiling. She is dressed in a sort of Commencement*

gown and stands with her hands outstretched as if about to recite.

There she is. Amanda, the Phenomenal Recitationist. She is the only girl in the world, ladies and gentlemen, who knows *The Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night* by heart, and absolutely refuses under any circumstances whatever to recite it, and I will prove it to you. Amanda?

Amanda. Yes, sir.

Gassaway. Tell these ladies and gentlemen—do you know that beautiful poem, *The Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night?*

Amanda. I do. I know it by heart.

Gassaway. You see, ladies and gentlemen, she admits it herself. Now, Amanda, will you recite it for us?

Amanda. Not for ten thousand dollars, sir.

Gassaway. Amanda, I will give you twenty thousand dollars and a box of caramels if you will recite *The Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night.*

Amanda. Nope.

Gassaway. Thirty thousand dollars and a ticket for the Faversham matinée.

Amanda (*shakes her head positively*). It is useless to ask, Mr. Gassaway.

Gassaway. Now, ladies and gentlemen, as evidence of our good faith, has any gentleman in the audience any offer to make? Don't be afraid. I know her. (*An usher walks down middle aisle and hands a note over footlights to* Gassaway.)

Gassaway (*opening letter*). What's this? (*Reads.*) Ha! Good. Amanda, there's a gentleman back in the sixteenth row who will give you forty thousand dollars' worth of green-trading stamps, redeemable in hand-painted crockery, mission furniture, and kerosene lamps, if you will recite *The Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night.* What do you say?

Amanda (*stamping her foot impatiently*). Never!

Gassaway. Is it any wonder, ladies

and gentlemen, that Mr. Flammerstein wants Amanda at almost any price? Curtain.

[*Boys draw curtains together.*

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the next exhibit on the programme was to have been my famous Boneyparte, the Ossified Book Agent, but I regret to say that going from Chicago to Philadelphia last week, Bow-Bow, the Dog-Faced Dachshund, got loose in the car and chewed him all to pieces, subsequently himself dying from an acute attack of appendicitis as a result of his unbridled appetite. We are therefore compelled, regretfully, to omit Boneyparte and to go right on to the next wonder of whom you may have heard. He is possibly the most widely advertised freak of the age, Professor Hirsutus the Bearded Gentleman. Curtain.

[*Boys draw curtains aside revealing* Professor Hirsutus, *a man with a*

flowing black beard, bearing a more or less marked resemblance to Svengali.

In other freak shows, ladies and gentlemen, you will find bearded ladies so numerous that there really has ceased to be anything particularly novel about them, but a Bearded Gentleman—where, may I ask, in all the freak firmament do you find such a capillary attraction as that? Look at him. A man of considerable impressiveness, is he not? And growing on his chin, a beard—a black beard—of real hair. And in order that you may have no misgivings as to its genuineness, I will pull it. (*Steps forward and tweaks the* Professor's *beard.*)

Hirsutus. Ow—wow! Stop that!

Gassaway. You see, ladies and gentlemen—(*pulling beard again.*)

Hirsutus. Ouch! Quit it, will you?

Gassaway. It not only does not come off, but when tweaked actually imparts a painful sensation to the Professor's

chin that causes him to wince, to protest audibly. And all of this, my friends, is a natural growth, as the Professor will tell you himself, if after our programme is finished you will stop and purchase some of his famous tonic by the use of which he manages to preserve that which nature has given him in all its pristine silky beauty, at the rate of ten cents a bottle. Curtain, if you please, young gentlemen.

[*Boys draw curtains together.*

The next attraction on our programme is Signor Del Fatto, the Living Skeleton. Of course, ladies and gentlemen, there are few of you who have not attended side-shows of one kind or another in the course of a misspent life, but I'll warrant that never have any of you seen a living skeleton like Signor Del Fatto. What I claim for him is that he has none of that repulsiveness which makes the average living skeleton a more or less painful object to look upon. There is

none of that egregious gauntness about him that leads you to feel that he is slowly but surely starving to death, so characteristic of the most famous living skeletons of the past. There is none of that hungering misery in his face that arouses rather your deep sympathy than your admiring wonder. Your impulse on seeing him is rather to rejoice in his sleek prosperity than to charge the management with cruelty to its freaks—but enough of description. We will let the Living Skeleton speak for himself. Curtain, young gentlemen.

[*Boys draw curtains to one side. Sitting on dais in a comfortable arm-chair is a cheerful-looking man of oleaginous personality, who weighs about two hundred and eighty pounds. In general appearance he resembles Dickens' fat boy. As curtains reach their height, he rises and bows with a well-fed smile to the audience.*

There you are, my friends. Look at him. Turn around, Signor Del Fatto, and let the ladies and gentlemen gaze upon your back—sixty-two inches broad. His waist—(*takes a tape-measure from his pocket and measures* Signor Del Fatto's *waist line, holding out tape at finish*)—his waist measurement is one hundred and forty-four inches, or four yards. If any gentleman—or lady either—in the audience will submit proofs to me of their ever having seen elsewhere a Living Skeleton of such circumference, I will cheerfully hand him my personal check for ten thousand dollars. I will go further and knock off thirty-six inches, or one ordinary waist, and say that if you can bring ten witnesses who will swear that they have seen in any of the high, low, or middle class side-shows of Europe, Asia, Africa, or the United States a Living Skeleton measuring three yards about the waist-line I will give fifteen thousand dollars' worth of

my Invincible Adhesive to any orphan asylum he may name. (*Pauses.*) No one takes me up. I thought so, and, to be quite frank with you, I would not have made the offer had I not been sure that you could not, for Signor Del Fatto is the only Living Skeleton of his kind. How much do you weigh, Signor?

Del Fatto. Before or after?

Gassaway. Before or after what, Signor?

Del Fatto. Dinner, sir.

Gassaway. Oh, you might give us both figures. You note, ladies and gentlemen, that he has two figures, while most Living Skeletons have only one. What are the figures, Del Fatto?

Del Fatto. Two hundred and eighty-two pounds before dinner.

Gassaway. Yes. And after dinner?

Del Fatto. Well, it depends upon the dinner, Mr. Gassaway, but most generally on salary day, sir, three hundred and eleven pounds, sir.

Gassaway (*triumphantly*). Think of it! A Living Skeleton weighing three hundred and eleven pounds, ladies and gentlemen. I challenge the world to produce another like him, and when I think that I am willing to let you see him for so insignificant a sum as one dime, charging nothing for my other attractions, I wonder—yes, ladies and gentlemen, I actually wonder at my moderation. Mr. John P. Pennypacker, with all his vast wealth, would have charged you at least a quarter. Curtain. Good-bye, Signor.

[Del Fatto *bows and boys draw curtains together.*

Gassaway. I am not going to describe the next freak, ladies and gentlemen, best known as the Man from Binghamton. No words of mine could do justice to his unique oddity. All I will say to you about him is that he is an American —born and bred at Binghamton, favorably known to you as one of the many

literary centres of Western New York. His own actions will prove him to be one of the few real wonders of the age. Curtain.

[*Boys draw curtains aside, revealing a tired-looking individual who sits staring sleepily at the audience as though bored to death. Occasionally he yawns and stretches his arms wearily.*

Now, if the audience will kindly preserve entire quiet and keep their eyes upon this gentleman they will see something that I venture to say will arouse their keenest interest. I have witnessed the exercise of this man's strange gift as many as twenty thousand times, I should say, and I have never yet failed to wonder at it myself. Age cannot wither nor custom stale its infinite uniquosity. (*Takes a copy of* London Punch *from table at his side.*) You see this object, ladies and gentlemen. It is nothing more nor less than a copy

of England's famous funny paper. (*Opening leaves and displaying the whole paper.*) You can see for yourselves that it is the real thing. It has no false backs, bottoms, or sides. It contains no interpolations of any sort, and, as you see it, it is exactly as it came from the printing-press in London. I hand it to this gentleman. (*He does so. Freak reaches forward and takes it, wearily.*) Now, sir, if you will kindly begin. Watch him carefully, everybody. One, two, three! (*Claps his hands.*) Begin.

[*The languid freak begins to read. He gradually emerges from his stupor. The weary look fades from his face and an eager interest comes into its place. Then he smiles broadly. Turns over a page and giggles. A moment later he begins to laugh aloud. He becomes wholly alert and finally goes off into a perfect gale of*

laughter, roaring aloud and slapping his knees with mirthful delight. At the climax of his hysterical laughter, Gassaway *calls for the curtain and it falls slowly, showing the freak in convulsions of mirth.*

Gassaway. I have travelled far, ladies and gentlemen, but until I encountered this person I never saw an American who could laugh like that over *London Punch.* Moreover, we have three times had his sanity tested by the leading alienists of the age, and in every instance he has been pronounced to be, in all other respects, a man of the highest intelligence.

We will now pass on, ladies and gentlemen, to one of the most appealing phenomena of our show. You have all of you seen that wonderful creature in the Barnum shows of the past, referred to by press agents and advertising managers of that great aggregation as

the most Stupefying and Stupendous Stupidity of the Freak World, Jo-Jo, the Dog-faced Boy. I think I have found his equal in Mo-Mo, the Boy with the Human Face. I found him only last summer on a farm near Akron, Ohio, living with his parents and entirely unaware of his own wonderful qualities as a freak, and you have the privilege of being the first to whom I have presented him. My reason for keeping him off the platform all this time has been my desire to assure myself that the strange character of his face was permanent, and not a mere passing illusion. Boys' faces, as you are doubtless aware, take on sudden and disturbing changes, and I feared that possibly Mo-Mo might be susceptible to those freaks of fortune which would destroy his chief value as an exhibit in a side-show. But as time has run along his face has remained always exactly as it was when I first saw him—

intensely human. Curtain, please, my lads.

[*Curtains are drawn and* Mo-Mo *stands revealed. He may grin or not, as he pleases, and, if he desires to wink at other boys in the audience in order to give himself greater confidence, there is no objection to his doing so. He may also make faces, but is not required to do so at this stage of the proceedings.*

I shall be very glad to have you observe this exhibit very closely. Look at the nose—it is just such a nose as you will find upon a human being; the lips have that same smiling conformation that you find in creatures of your own species and the teeth, instead of being tusky or mere fang-shaped dentoids such as you ordinarily find in the lower orders of human beings, are as nearly like yours and mine as they could well be. The ears are a trifle large, but

perfectly formed, with lobes and auricular passages precisely similar to our own. The chin is pronounced, not missing as in most animals, and the forehead is well shaped and prominent, not low and receding as you might expect. Surmounting the whole you will see a shock of hair that is soft and silky, with no trace whatever of a bristle. I consider myself most fortunate in having happened upon this boy with the human face before he was snapped up by others. His disposition is gentle, and when he uses his voice it is not in short, sharp, jerky barks or yelps, but in rather musical, well-modulated sounds that bear a remarkable resemblance to spoken words. This I will let you observe for yourselves. Mo-Mo, can you let us hear you speak?

Mo-Mo. Awh, whatcher givin' us?

Gassaway. You see, ladies and gentlemen, it is as I have said—you would almost think he was using human speech.

"Awh, whatcher givin' us," sounds almost like the questioning of a human soul having like aspirations to our own. Another trial: Mo-Mo, if some kind gentleman in the audience were to offer you a piece of strawberry shortcake and a glass of ginger-pop, would you accept them?

Mo-Mo. Betcherlife!

Gassaway. A favorite expression of Mo-Mo's, ladies and gentlemen, signifying assent. It resembles strongly the idiom used in certain grades of human society, employed to express the emotion of entire certainty, a sense of unquestionable confidence. This strange little creature is very gentle by nature, but subject to sudden fits of indisposition about nine o'clock in the morning during the school season. From these he recovers rapidly, however, as the luncheon hour approaches, by afternoon showing slight evidences of illness, if any. He feeds largely on pie and the

drum-sticks of chicken, and it is only when he eats that he betrays very materially that animal nature the existence of which the human quality of his face seems to deny. Curtain, boys.

[*The Boy with the Human Face makes faces at the curtain boys, and twiddles both thumbs at his ears at the audience, making his hands look like bats' wings as the curtain falls and the lecturer resumes.*

Gassaway. In presenting my next human wonder, ladies and gentlemen, I feel that I am making what may be called a special appeal to the ladies. A mere man will probably see nothing extraordinary in the peculiarities of Madame Panini, the Culinary Curio, but in the hearts of the ladies she will unquestionably strike a responsive chord. I am aware that I run an especial risk in exhibiting her in this particular community, where creatures of her

kind are as scarce as Koh-i-noors in the British crown, but I warn you now that any attempt to get her away from me will be met by all the resistance on my part which the laws of contract make possible. Madame Panini, while in no sense a mere chattel, is for the next five years as unalterably my property as though she were nothing more than a grand piano which I had bought and paid for with my own money. She has signed a cast-iron contract which gives to me the exclusive use of her services for the coming five years. There is no loop-hole of evasion left in its provisions by which, yielding to the tempting offers of larger wages—I pay her five thousand dollars a week, the exact sum which Madame Screecherini, the Eminent Fareweller, receives for displaying her lack of voice on the vaudeville stage—she may endeavor to escape me. Hence, I should advise any of you who may be inclined to make the at-

tempt to get her away from mine into your own employ, to spare yourselves the pain of a refusal. Curtain.

[*The boys draw the curtains aside and* Madame Panini *is shown standing on the dais. She presents a picture somewhat resembling in its general outlines the statuesque presentments of Minerva by the Greek sculptors of renown, only instead of holding in her hands the shield and lance, with her brow surmounted by the helmet of learning, she holds a rolling-pin in her left hand, a frying-pan is held shield-wise in her right, with her auburn locks restrained from flying too loosely by an inverted blue enamelled-ware kettle, which she wears on her head, set well back, with the handle sticking out behind like a steel-constructed pigtail.*

This noble figure, ladies and gentlemen, is not, as you might think, a rep-

lica from the hands of Phidias of some marvelled bit of sculptuary. It is not the Goddess Minerva, the embodiment of wisdom of the ancients, but a woman of to-day, Madame Panini, until the first of last month a cook. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, a cook! Gaze upon her. Feast your eyes upon her, and you who are now merely children, in some future age, remember to tell your grandchildren that you have seen her. Your mothers will tell you why she must be set down as the most unique product of the twentieth century.

[*A pause.*

Man in the Audience. I don't see anything wonderful in a plain cook.

Gassaway. Doubtless you don't—you are a man—but, as I have said, Madame Panini's marvellous qualities will appeal more especially to the ladies. Madame Panini is a cook—yes; nothing wonderful in that, but when I tell you that she has remained in one place

for a period of time exceeding six months—

Voice in Audience. No—no!

Gassaway (*taking a note from his pocket and reading*). I will prove it to you. Listen. "This is to certify that the bearer of this note, Bridget Panini, has been in my employ as a cook for the past seven months, and I have found her always sober, industrious, obliging, and civil. She leaves me to enter the unrivalled aggregation of amazing actualities of Professor Gassaway. Signed, Mrs. J. Brown-Smythe, Mount Vernon, N. Y." There it is, ladies and gentlemen, you may read it for yourselves. (*Tosses letter into audience.*) And any one of you who doubts its genuineness may write to Mrs. Brown-Smythe at the address there given, No. 639 Hobson Boulevard, Mount Vernon, N. Y. Indeed, I would suggest that a committee of ladies be appointed after the close of the exhibition to communicate with

Mrs. Brown-Smythe, in case you still have doubts. In case you are doubtful as to her cooking, I may add that I have in my pocket one of her most recent fish-balls. (*Takes tennis-ball painted brown from his pocket and holds it up before audience.*) It is perfect in contour (*absent-mindedly bounces it upon stage, and catches it in his hand as it bounds upward*) and possesses a resilience which I for one have never found—

Panini. Whisht, Misther Gashaway! Can't yez cut it short? Me arms ache wid holdin' these tings.

Gassaway. One moment, Madame Panini—which I for one have never found in any of the fish-balls I have eaten in the homes of the cultured and refined. Thank you very much, Madame Panini. Curtain, boys.

[*Boys lower curtains.* Gassaway *puts the fish-ball back into his pocket.*

I would let you taste the fish-ball,

ladies and gentlemen, were it not that it is the last of the lot, and has already been promised to Sawdoff, the Russian Giant, for his breakfast to-morrow morning. Madame Panini's photographs are on sale in the lobby at the meagre cost of ten cents apiece.

[*A pause.*

Gassaway. Now, my friends, having shown you a culinary wonder that can be appreciated best by the ladies present, I feel that in justice to the other sex I should present to your attention one who will demonstrate her chiefest value to the gentlemen in the audience. Like a certain illustrious personage, I believe in a square deal, and I do not propose that any portion of this audience shall go away from here to-night feeling that another portion of the same audience has been especially favored by myself. So I have peculiar pleasure in presenting to you, Ignota, the Domestic Wonder. She is called Ignota because

no one knows her name. She signed her contract with me with the distinct understanding that I should not look at the signature. Hence it is that, although she is in fact the most miraculous marvel of our age, even I do not know her name. Curtain, my good lads.

[*The curtains are drawn and show the dais occupied by a pleasant-looking little lady, rather stout, smiling pleasantly as she reads a cook-book. At her side is a waste-basket in which repose a large number of letters and a small book. She holds likewise a small child in her lap, who is apparently sleeping. The child may be a boy or a girl, whichever happens to be the more convenient for the lady impersonating the freak. A lap-dog must not be used for this scene under any circumstances.*

Gassaway. Is it not a beautiful spec-

tacle! Ignota reading Mrs. Maginnis' *Sixty Soups, or How to Live on Ten Hard-boiled Eggs a Year*, while clasped in her arms she holds her little one—little Jacky (*or little Polly as the case may be*). Now, ladies and gentlemen, Ignota is the Woman Who Does Not Play Bridge. Just think of it. Here is a woman who prefers home and husband, child, and the cares of the household to that wondrous game which with the grip of the deadly Octopus holds the land in its firm clutch. See—as evidence of her sincerity (*springs forward and seizes the waste-basket*), one, two, five, ten, twenty, fifty invitations to play Bridge with her neighbors—all hurled unceremoniously into the waste-basket. And with them, what do we find? This, ladies and gentlemen! (*Takes book out of basket, which turns out to be* Elwell on Bridge.) Do you recognize it, ladies? Nothing more nor less than Elwell—and, like the invitations them-

selves, tossed into the waste-basket, with a courage alongside of which that of Joan of Arc seems mean and trivial. You who are husbands, tell me honestly, did you ever see anything like this either upon a platform or in your own homes? I ask the ladies if in their experience, either in this town or elsewhere, they have ever seen Ignota's equal, or a woman who in this respect is even like her? I never did. (*Takes out handkerchief and wipes his eyes.*) Even my own precious Araminta is absent this evening, even as she was last evening, and the evening before, and the evening before that, back through numberless evenings until the mind fails to take them in, squandering the vast earnings of this show upon the elusive Grand Slam, not because she likes it, but in order to maintain her social position in the great City of Schoharie, where we reside. Take one more look at her, friends. (*A pause.*)

A lovely, unprecedented thing! (*A pause.*) Curtain, boys.

[*Usher hands note over footlights to* Gassaway. *He opens and reads it, and shakes his head.*

In answer to the gentleman who has sent me this I would say (*shaking letter aloft*) that Ignota is not a widow, and therefore his most passionate proposal and appropriate offering of his heart and hand, coupled with an assurance of room in his trunk for her slippers, must be gratefully and regretfully declined. I do not wonder, however, at his note. It is no new thing. The lady receives on an average not less than two hundred and fifty offers of marriage per month, but Mr. Ignota is still happily alive. He is absent this evening, playing pinochle with a few of his old college friends, else he also would have appeared in this beautiful tableau of the really happy family.

[*A pause, during which the audience*

is expected to show its tremendous appreciation of the marvels of Ignota.

Gassaway. And now, ladies and gentlemen, as the hour is growing late, I will bring my exhibition to a close with an exhibit which I venture to say makes a fitting climax to an evening of wonder. Mademoiselle Outasighti, the Invisible Soprano. She is unparalleled, and I freely confess that I do not understand her myself. Unlike most sopranos, she is absolutely invisible to the naked eye. Nordica, Eames, Sembrich, Melba—all these great ladies are marvels in their way, but every one of them when they appear on the stage can be clearly seen with or without the use of opera-glasses, but Outasighti, the Invisible Soprano, has never yet been beheld by mortal man or woman. Curtain, boys.

[*Boys draw curtains to one side and reveal the dais apparently unoccupied.*

There she is, ladies and gentlemen. Good-evening, Mademoiselle.

A Voice. Good-evening, Mr. Gassaway.

Gassaway. I trust you are feeling in fine voice this evening.

A Voice. I am slightly hoarse, Mr. Gassaway, but I think I shall be able to undertake the work required of me provided there are no encores.

Gassaway. Mademoiselle Outasighti requests that there be no encores, ladies and gentlemen, because she is suffering from hoarseness.

Man in the Audience. I can't see her.

Gassaway. Of course you can't, sir. If you could she would not be invisible. That is the strange thing, sir, about the lady. Now Mademoiselle Outasighti, may we have a simple little ballade—something like—ah—*Oh, Promise Me?*

A Voice. With great pleasure, sir.

[*A piano is played and* Mademoiselle Outasighti *sings* Oh, Promise Me,

at conclusion of which the boys let the curtain fall.

Gassaway. Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your kind attention, and, as a special mark of my appreciation of your courtesy, let me hand you all photographs, free of charge, of this greatest of all wonders, Mademoiselle Outasighti, the Invisible Soprano.

[*Throws a large number of blank cards to all parts of the auditorium, bows, and the main curtain falls. In response to the applause which ought to follow, whether it does or not, the curtain again rises, disclosing all the freaks standing in a row, with* Gassaway *proudly smiling in the centre, with a blank space at his right, presumably occupied by the invisible* Mademoiselle Outasighti.

THE END

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